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History of undercover efforts date back to Gen. Washington

By Beth Weiner

When news of the CIA's involvement in the mining of Nicaraguan ports are made public, there was an uproar among American government leaders and citizens.

And months later, when it was revealed the CIA had written a "how-to-do-it guerilla warfare manual" for Nicaraguan rebels, there were numerous investigations because of the storm of protest.

Yet, the CIA is the only U.S. agency authorized to operate covert action programs, and while it is not America's largest intelligence agency, it is the most prominent, according to Bill Nelson, former deputy director of operations at the CIA.

But, intelligence operations in the United States date back to the American revolution when Continental Army Gen. George Washington had secret agents spy on the British. Washington even went one step beyond and had planted false battle plans in British army camps.

American intelligence plans were haphazard though for the next 170 years. But Japan's surprise attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor in 1941 demonstrated the importance of gathering effective intelligence information.

And six months after the attack, the Office of Strategic Service, which was the CIA's predecessor, began under the direction of Brig. Gen. William Donovan.

The OSS worked with European resistance groups analyzing Nazi troop strength. Even though it was successful in its sabotage operation, the OSS was eliminated after World War II.

"The OSS did not fit the bill, but government officials realized the importance of a permanent peacetime intelligence agency," Nelson said. "We did not want a repeat of Pearl Harbor."

In 1947 the National Security Act was passed, creating the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the National Security

Council. The council serves as the President's chief advisory panel on national security and has jurisdiction over the CIA.

Part of the CIA's function is to advise the National Security Council on intelligence activities, and this information is essential in protecting U.S. security.

The director of the CIA is responsible for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure, Nelson said. Yet, it is that provision which has been used numerous times by the CIA when its officials have withheld information from congressional and public inquiries.

At the CIA's disposal though, is sophisticated equipment such as electronic satellites, radar, photo intelligence and secret electronic monitoring of communications.

Since World War II, this field of technical intelligence collection has blossomed with state-of-the-art devices, and today there are dozens of technical intelligence systems.

Nelson said the CIA also gathers information through photographic intelligence and through acoustic intelligence. These methods of technical intelligence gathering have come a long way from the days when this information was collected by hand-held cameras or cameras attached to U-2 spy planes.

Although the CIA has about 18,000 employees, it is not the largest intelligence community. The National Security Agency has 20,000 employees and support from at least 40,000 members of the armed forces overseas. Its annual budget is over \$1 billion, and it is under the direction of the Secretary of Defense.

NSA's main duties are to monitor and intercept international communications, decode foreign information, and maintain the security of U.S. codes.

Even though each branch of the armed services has its own intelligence arm, the Defense Intelligence Agency, established in 1961, coordinates and works to

eliminate duplication of the services' intelligence efforts. The DIA reports to the Secretary of Defense through the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research is one of the smallest intelligence communities with only 300 employees and a budget under \$14 million. It supplies the Secretary of State intelligence information from U.S. foreign service posts and the intelligence community.

The National Reconnaissance Office, established in 1961, is under the Air Force's control, but its existence is not acknowledged by the U.S. government. Yet, its budget is in the billions of dollars and its personnel are not "subject to personal scrutiny," Nelson said.

Another, and perhaps more well-known member of the U.S. intelligence community, is the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In addition to interstate law enforcement, the FBI conducts counterintelligence activities in the 50 states.

"The climate for the intelligence community has improved under Reagan," Nelson said. In an executive order issued during his first term, he declared, "All reasonable and lawful means must be used to ensure that the U.S. will receive the best intelligence available."

"We all are part of a team working to protect our nation and its citizens," Nelson said.

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It's no surprise: CIA's work is covert, former agent says

By Beth Weiner

Before a large crowd of local residents, Bill Nelson, former deputy director for operations of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), discussed U.S. intelligence and the role of undercover operations.

His talk was the final lecture in the eight-part Great Decisions '85 series sponsored by the Continuing Education Center and the Rancho Bernardo Chapter of the American Association of University Women.

For 28 years, Nelson was part of CIA activity, working his way up from a case officer. Distinguished looking and quiet spoken, Nelson does not fit the image many Americans have of CIA personnel, and a few students said they were disappointed "he was not wearing a raincoat like agents in Hollywood spy movies."

"There are many misconceptions about the CIA and the people we recruit," Nelson said. "The CIA wants a certain type of person for its Career Intelligence Training Program."

For every 100 openings, there are about 9,000 applications. The CIA wants applicants who speak a foreign language fluently, who are interested in foreign affairs, and who have a Master's degree.

Nelson estimates the average age of a new recruit is about 28 years old. And within a month of their training, CIA officials have placed them in different areas, depending on their abilities.

"It is often difficult to determine who will make a good operations officer," he said. "I remember one man who was bashful and small. He was only about 5'4".

"Yet his temperament and appearance made him a popular recruiter in Asia. His modest, laid back approach was more successful than the pushy approach, and he had agents coming out of his finger tips."

In his talk Nelson defined terms essential to understanding intelligence activities. A word given high priority in any agent's vocabulary is "espionage," which he defined as "secretly securing from controlled sources critical in-

formation protected by foreign governments or individuals."

He stressed this information is essential for U.S. policy and can reveal vital information such as the Soviet Union's intentions towards America.

He defined a controlled source as a person who has demonstrated the ability to have access to the information and a history of reliability. In addition, this information also must be verifiable.

If the agency did not protect its sources, Nelson told the group, it would be exposing itself to a series of dangers.

Another popular word for any agent is "counter-espionage," and according to Nelson, it means "secretly penetrating a foreign intelligence or counterintelligence organization to detect and control their agents and operations."

During World War II, the British were successful in discovering agents planted by the Nazis and in controlling the information they were passing on to their German leaders. This misdirected information enabled the British to prevent the Nazis from determining where a European landing would occur.

Another essential phrase for any agent is "covert action," which classical terms is "secretly influencing a foreign country by non-attributable means."

"When CIA operational officers work abroad, the agency uses different types of cover," Nelson said. If the officers have official cover, they pose as members of the American embassy or military staff. But, they can not become too well-known according to Nelson, or they "blow their cover."

Non-official cover occurs when CIA operational officers pose as American businessmen abroad. This type of cover can have its drawbacks, Nelson stressed.

"These operational officers often do such a great job for the company that the firm recruits the officers from under the CIA and turns them into highly paid businessmen," he said.

The CIA is not the only intelligence agency in the world that uses

various types of cover for its operational officers, and the Soviets especially are notorious for it. Nelson estimates that out of 4,000 Soviets working at the United Nations Mission in New York City, more than half are Soviet intelligence officers or agents.

"Since the United States is a democracy, our newspapers and magazines provide in-depth information to the public and much of it is useful to other nations," he said. "We don't control our press, but the Russians control the Soviet press."

"Soviet agents learn information from reading our publications. But, our operational officers in Russia never pick up any vital information from reading the censored Soviet publications. The Russians have it all laid out for them here."

When a high ranking Soviet officer defects to the West, though, it is a bonanza of information for the CIA, according to Nelson. He remembers when a top level Soviet defector helped Kennedy make a decision in the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960s.

By combining the defector's information with intelligence gathered from U-2 flights over the Soviet Union, U.S. government officials realized the Soviets were not as far along in the development of nuclear weapons as they had thought.

"Accurate information about a country's enemies is essential," Nelson added. "For instance, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war took the Israelis by surprise as a result of Egyptian and Syrian deception."

"The Arabs made their military build-up look like just a routine training maneuver, and the day before the attack, had some of their soldiers leisurely bathing in the canal."

Although the Israelis were caught "flat-footed by incorrect intelligence reports, their extraordinary heroics won the war," he stressed.

"This episode shows the importance of keeping up-to-date accurate intelligence information on your enemies' activities," Nelson said.

"That's where the CIA comes in."